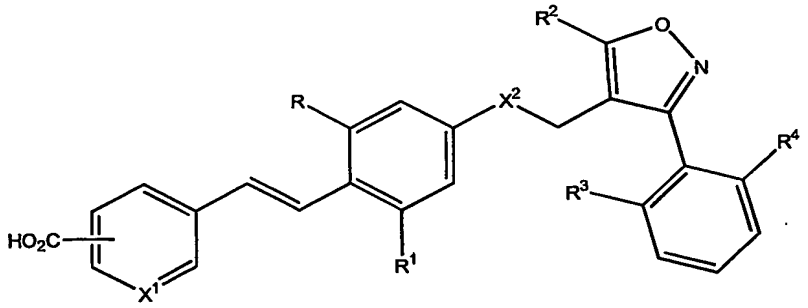
What is Claimed is:

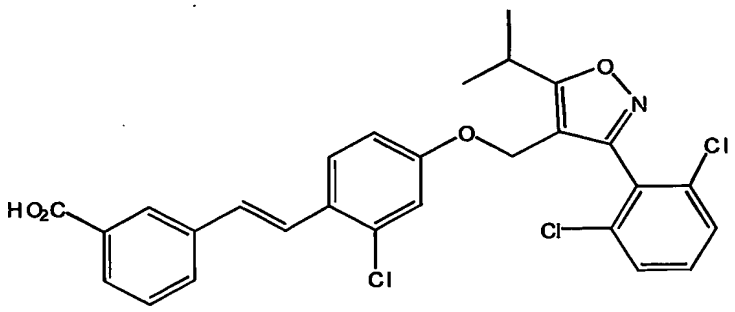
1. A method for treating liver fibrosis in a mammalian subject comprising administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of an FXR agonist.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the FXR agonist is a compound of Formula (II)



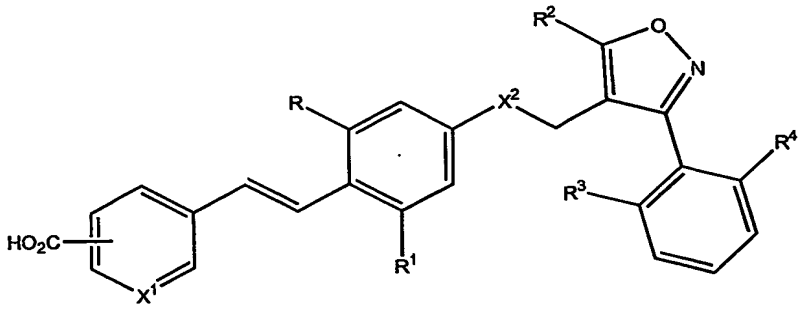
wherein X^1 is CH or N; X^2 is O or NH; R and R^1 are independently H, lower alkyl, halogen, or CF_3; $R^2$is lower alkyl; R^3 and R^4 are independently H, lower alkyl, halogen, CF_3, OH, O-alkyl, or O-polyhaloalkyl.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the FXR agonist comprises a compound of Formula (I):



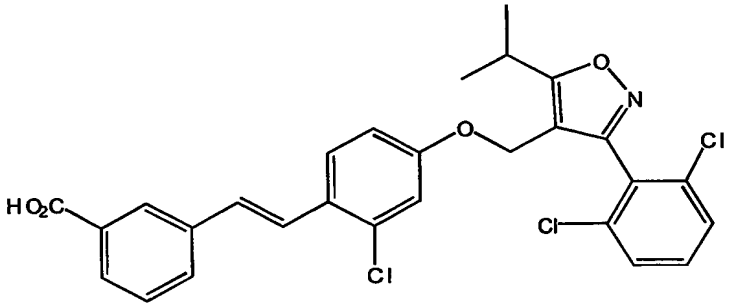
4. A method of reducing or preventing development of liver fibrosis comprising administering to a mammalian subject in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of an FXR agonist.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the FXR agonist comprises a compound of Formula (II)



wherein X^1 is CH or N; X^2 is O or NH; R and R^1 are independently H, lower alkyl, halogen, or CF_3; $R^2$is lower alkyl; R^3 and R^4 are independently H, lower alkyl, halogen, CF_3, OH, O-alkyl, or O-polyhaloalkyl.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein the FXR agonist comprises a compound of Formula (I):



7 . A method according to claim 1 where said FXR agonist is not a naturally occurring bile acid.

8 . A method according to claim 4 where said FXR agonist is not a naturally occurring bile acid.

9 . A method according to claim 1 where said FXR agonist is a synthetic small molecule organic compound.

10. A method according to claim 4 where said FXR agonist is a synthetic small molecule organic compound.

11. A method according to claim 9 where a naturally occuring bile acid is administered concurrently with said FXR agonist.

12. A method according to claim 10 where a naturally occuring bile acid is administered concurrently with said FXR agonist.